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Advanced Instructional Procedures

Methods Trial #2 – March 22, 2013

Peer to Peer Instruction

In this “methods trial” I am using peer to peer instruction during an automatic transmission class containing twelve students. The focus of the day is “apply device” usage and gear train operation/diagnosis. The students have already had considerable instructor based instruction on the topic. They are now at a point of using the information to make a failure analysis of transmission components. The students are broken into groups of two and each group is required to create a component failure scenario to pose to the other five groups. Each group will be prepared to provide the symptoms generated by the failure they make up much like a potential customer with a complaint at the dealership.

It starts with the first group (representing the customer) explaining what the customer would have experienced when the vehicle started having problems. The other five groups could ask questions much like a service writer at the dealership would ask the customer for more detail. Once all the information was determined from the customer the questions to the first group would be posed as if from a technician trying to diagnosis the faulty transmission. Members of the five groups would ask the first group what would be the result if a particular test was performed and they would answer accordingly. This would continue until the potential cause was identified.

This type of strategy causes a deep thought process not only for the people posing as the technician but also the people in group one because they must think through the symptoms created by the failed component. If they do not fully understand the way each component works and interrelates to other components, the symptoms they describe will be inaccurate and misleading. It is a good way to force the students to really think it through. It becomes a game and a competition between each group to see who can make up the best, most difficult problem to diagnosis.

This approach not only makes the students think but it makes them think with a passion. That is what is needed to get the best from each student.